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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, February 19, 1941

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "JUST FOR FUN, THESE WINTER DAYS". Information from the Farm Security Administration. U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today the Farm Security Administration talks about low-cost, and no-cost, playtime activities of boys and girls in its borrower families. Play is important for children, you know - almost as important in one way as eating and sleeping, and fortunately can be quite inexpensive. Families can spend time and thought on play equipment and have just as good times as those who spend cash.

Take the "toss-target" games every child loves. You can nail a short piece of broomstick to the center of a small square board and use it for quoits. Or you can drive an old ice-pick into a wooden base, set it flat on the floor, and try to "ring it." For rings you can use old fruit jar rubbers, old embroidery hoops, small rope rings made by splicing rope, rubber rings made by fastening pieces of old rubber hose together with adhesive tape, or horseshoe shapes cut from old automobile tires.

Or you can turn over a straightback chair and use the upturned legs for targets. 'Or drive nails or spikes tilting upward into a square or oblong board which you can set up or hang on the wall to throw rings at. Or use tea-cup hooks or little right-angle curtain rod hooks to screw into the end of an orange crate. Give each hook or nail a different value - like 5, 10, 25, and so on, to vary your score according to your skill. A variation of "ring toss" is to throw beans or buttons or pennies into a muffin pan several feet away, numbering the little rounds in the muffin tin as you do in ring toss, or pasting figures from an old calendar in them. Or you can set several little boxes inside one another, making a nest of boxes, and toss into them.

You can vary the bean bag game by throwing at a large funny face drawn or painted on a square of cardboard, with holes for eyes, nose, and mouth. Or you can toss bean bags, or balls made of carpet rags or twine at a "pocket target." To make a pocket target, cut a large square from a burlap feed bag and make a hole in the center and a hole in each corner, with pockets back of the holes to catch the balls. Attach a string at each corner of the target so you can tie it upright between two chairs standing near each other.

It's always fun to use modeling clay and mold little figures of different kinds. You can make your own clay if you like. Just mix a cup of flour and half a cup of salt with cold water to the right consistency, and color it with ink, mercurchrome, or laundry blueing. Then wrap it in waxed paper or a damp cloth and keep it in an air-tight container. If it gets dry, knead it with wet hands or dampen it with water.

This is a good time of the year for parties, too. Washington's Birthday comes on Saturday, and maybe the children at your house are wondering right now what they can do for a good time. Well, for one thing, they can match cut-up pictures of George and Martha Washington; for another, they can "mend the cherry tree"--pin the tree trunk on the base, blindfolded, instead of "pinning the tail on the donkey"; and can play "going to Valley Forge" instead of the familiar "going to Jerusalem." Refreshments can be some cherry pie from the cherries you probably canned last year.

In March comes St. Patrick's day, which is a fine excuse for an Irish party. You can have little green decorations and cut-out pigs, pipes, potatoes, harps, and shamrocks all around, and guests can tell Irish jokes and stories and sing Irish songs like "Sweet Rosie O'Grady", "Peggy O'Neil," "My Wild Irish Rose," "When Irish Eyes are Smiling," "Mother Machree," and "Wearing O' the Green." Interesting games can be played, such as "the Blarney Stone" where boys pay compliments to unknown girls in the group, and the girls later identify themselves. Appropriate refreshments are potato salad - Irish potatoes, of course - with diced green peppers and



pickles for greenery and flavor - and hot tea with little sugar cookies in pipe or pig shape, iced with green frosting.

Then comes April with April Fool's Day and a fine chance for a "Hokus-Pokus" party. Invitations can be written with invisible ink or by dipping a clean pen into milk; add a note in pencil, of course "Hold over lamp to read." You might also ask the guests to come "dressed backwards." The night of the party before the guests arrive, hang a sign on the front door saying "Wet Paint - Go to Back Door", and on back door put "April Fool."

As people come in, put little dunce caps of brown wrapping paper on their heads and ask them to shake hands with everyone, using the left hand. Make those who use the right hand pay a forfeit. Some forfeits are, to carry on an imaginary telephone conversation with someone, to say several nice things about themselves, or to place one hand where the other can't reach it--on their elbow. Have games where you give prizes for the lowest score instead of the highest, and have surprise refreshments of some kind, served perhaps on a tablecloth or luncheon cloth spread on the floor.

Or you might have a "Winter Carnival Party". Decorations can be of white crepe paper, with pieces of cotton around for snow drifts, icicles can be of discarded tinfoil cut in strips, and a snow man can be made of two bushel baskets set on top of each other, with a stuffed pillow for a head, and an old sheet for a cover. A good mixer or "ice breaker" at the beginning would be weather reports. In this, the guests bow and smile to each other for fair weather, snub each other for a blizzard, and sway back and forth for "variable winds." They can have a snowshoe race by wearing shoe boxes for snow shoes, and a snowflake race by fanning tiny squares of white tissue paper across the floor to a goal post. Favors can be candy lolly-pops dressed as little eskimo dolls in white crepe paper hoods and suits. And eskimo dogs can be made by stuffing prunes and covering them with powdered sugar,

and making toothpick legs and a marshmallow head. Other refreshments can be snow-balls - which are popcorn balls - an hot chocolate topped with marshmallows, or graham crackers toasted with marshmallows between them.

You probably know a lot of game and party ideas yourself, but the Farm Security Administration hopes these may add to your store.

